

The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, the Senator from Iowa has, for at least since the early 1990s, been forcefully arguing for his position. We have the same difference of opinion fundamentally that I mentioned in connection with Senator UDALL's amendment. We are glad for these rules changes and amendments to come to the floor, but only if they are approved or rejected with the requirement of 67 votes. So for that reason, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Oregon.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST— S. RES. 21

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, it has been the tradition of this Chamber, when there are rules proposals, to put them on the floor for debate and to hold that debate. Then if the body does not like that, either to defeat them outright or to table them or refer them to committee for further work.

Indeed, under the Constitution, it is in order for us to have a debate now as a simple majority to amend our rules. The Constitution calls for a supermajority for impeachments, a supermajority for treaties, but it calls for a simple majority to amend our rules and to organize ourselves.

Many Members of this body often talk about the Constitution, and it is the Constitution we are talking about right now when it calls for a simple majority to be able to organize.

So that is why, in 1953, the Senate debated Senator Anderson's resolution, eventually defeating it by tabling it. That is why, in 1957 and in 1959, they proceeded to put it on the floor—both sides agreeing that it was appropriate under the Constitution to have the debate in this Chamber—and then to either approve or to vote down or to table or to refer to committee. Then, in 1961, Anderson's rule proposal to make cloture three-fifths present and voting was referred to committee. So it was defeated again, but it was debated and referred to committee. Then the committee returned it to the floor for further debate. No one objected to us holding a debate.

In fact, here is the irony. We are talking about fixing the broken Senate because debate is unable to take place, and this very conversation we are having right now, with proposals to be put on the floor, is being objected to by the other side because they are saying it is not appropriate. But the Constitution says it is appropriate. The tradition of the Senate says it is appropriate.

So I too have a resolution to put on the floor, a proposal for debate. It is the talking filibuster proposal. It is important that Senators not be able to object to the regular order of 51 and then go home or go on vacation and hide from the American people, but that if they believe there should be ad-

ditional debate, they come to this floor and debate. The people of America believe that is what the filibuster is about: making your case before the American people. Let's make it so.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 21, a resolution to amend rule XIX and rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate to enact the talking filibuster; that there be 6 hours for debate equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with no amendments in order; and that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to vote on adoption of the resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, the Senator from Oregon is a former speaker of the house in Oregon, and he has been a long observer of the Senate, having come here first working for Senator Hatfield, and he has been effective and passionate in his views.

Today, I was reviewing some remarks made by largely Democratic Senators, from 4 or 5 years ago, when some Republicans got the idea that it might be a good idea to make this a more majoritarian body, and Senator SCHUMER, Senator REID, Senator Clinton, and Senator Obama all said it would be a mistake.

So although I greatly respect the Senator from Oregon, we have a difference of opinion about whether it is in the best interest of the Senate and of the country to change the rules in this way, so I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Tennessee for coming to the floor. I applaud his long service.

When I first came to the Senate, Senator Hatfield asked me to bring greetings to his former colleagues, and I had the chance to sit down with Senator ALEXANDER to convey those greetings and to work with him on some projects, including the advocacy for electric vehicles. It is good for the American economy, good for the strategic positioning of America in terms of our consumption of energy, and certainly good for the environment.

I wish to note that while we disagree on this, this is actually the way it should happen. We should come to the floor and share our respective views, disagree with each other, make our points. I believe, at this moment, we should be on a rule. We should be debating it. My colleague has expressed his difference of opinion in a very gracious and respectful manner, and that, too, should be a factor of Senate dialog, so I thank the Senator.

I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS-CONSENT REQUEST— S. RES. 24

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I submit S. Res. 24, on behalf of myself and Senator TOM UDALL, proposing a standing order of the Senate, and I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of the resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, for purposes of having the resolution go over, under the rule, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard. The resolution will go over, under the rule.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASEY). Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOTICE OF ISSUANCE

Mr. INOUE. Mr. President, pursuant to section 304(d) of the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. sec. 1384(d)), the Office of Compliance, U.S. Congress, submitted a notice of issuance of final regulations. The notice contains final regulations related to the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998—Regulations under section 4(c)(4) of that Act. The Congressional Accountability Act requires this notice be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD; therefore I ask unanimous consent that the notice be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

OFFICE OF COMPLIANCE TEXT OF REGULATIONS FOR THE VETERANS EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES ACT OF 1998

When approved by the House of Representatives for the House of Representatives, these regulations will have the prefix "H." When approved by the Senate for the Senate, these regulations will have the prefix "S." When approved by Congress for the other employing offices covered by the CAA, these regulations will have the prefix "C."

In this draft, "H&S Regs" denotes the provisions that would be included in the regulations applicable to be made applicable to the House and Senate, and "C Reg" denotes the provisions that would be included in the regulations to be made applicable to other employing offices.

PART 1—Extension of Rights and Protections Relating to Veterans' Preference Under Title 5, United States Code, to Covered Employees of the Legislative Branch (section 4(c) of the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998)